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CC:
Date: 6/26/2013 7:42:21 AM
Subject: Fw: West Lake News Coverage

For yor reading pleasure

From: Lancaster, Kris

Sent: Wednesday, June 26, 2013 7:29:03 AM

To: R7 Senior Staff; Himes, Beckie; Young, Belinda; Washburn, Ben; Quirarte-Ortiz, Cecilia; Chelsey Derks; Whitley, Christopher; Bryan, David; Kring, Debbie; Morrison, Denise; Whitaker, Dianna; Barker, Emily; Thomas, Hattie; Janette Lambert; Fenton, Kathleen; Lancaster, Kris; Sanders, LaTonya; Kessler, Martin; Maxwell, MaryEllen; Surber, Nancy; Hood, Rich; Hatch, Sarah; Saundra Newsom; Castro, Toni

Subject: West Lake News Coverage

Fox 2 News - West Lake Landfill Community Meeting Gets Rowdy - 6/26/13 -

<http://fox2now.com/2013/06/25/west-lake-landfill-community-meeting/>

MARYLAND HEIGHTS, MO (KTVI) – A showdown with the EPA over nuclear waste at a Bridgeton landfill drew a big – and at times rowdy – crowd Tuesday night at Pattonville High School.

About 650 people turned out.

The EPA's message: new air and water tests showed no health risk from the West Lake Landfill on St. Charles Rock Road; more tests would be coming on how best to proceed toward a long-term solution.

For most residents, there was only 1 solution: get the stuff out of here. It reminded you of the crowd at a Cardinals game, trying to stir the home team; But the rhythmic clapping was actually in protest.

The EPA set up poster boards breaking down test findings in another part of the school. Residents shouted at EPA experts, demanding everything be brought over to the auditorium, where the question and answer session began, minutes later.

The issue has come to a head with the revelation of problems at the Bridgetown Sanitary Landfill, next to West Lake.

Workers are currently capping the Bridgeton Sanitary Landfill, it to minimize odors coming from deep below the surface – where the waste is smoldering.

Residents fear fire will spread underground to West Lake and the 7 tons of uranium diluted with nearly 40 tons of soil and dumped there in the early 1970's.

There are new concerns about whether that soil was initially toxic, as well. Resident Jeremy McCormick didn't want to wait on more EPA testing.

His 1 year old son, Jacob, had a message written on his one-sie: 'For my 1st birthday I want clean air'.

"I'm living there. It doesn't make sense for me or my son. We're actually living with my parents now up in Florissant because we just can't live there," McCormick said.

"Based on the weight of the evidence that event over there on the Bridgeton side does not threaten the West Lake Landfill," said EPA Region 7 Administrator, Karl Brooks. "It gives us still time to assess the science, take a look at the engineering and make good choices about it...there are options such as put a cap over it and seal the west lake landfill off.

Another would be a partial removal of some of the material. There's a full scale removal."

"There is one other option. Buy out the residents...I'm tired of hearing that the chemicals are within OSHA safe levels. It just doesn't make sense. I'm not working there. I'm living

there,” McCormick said.

“It won’t happen fast. There’s no need for us to make a fast decision. We want to be right, rather than fast,” said Brooks.

He said all options were on the table.

Rock Road Industries, which owns the landfill, favors capping the material. Brooks said a final decision on how best to proceed was likely a year or two away.

St. Louis Post Dispatch - Angry residents tell EPA officials to remove West Lake nuclear waste - 6/26/13 - The regional head of the Environmental Protection Agency came to the St. Louis area Tuesday night to quell fears about tons of radioactive waste buried at the West Lake Landfill in Bridgeton.

But a public meeting that drew hundreds of people to Pattonville High School only stoked more anger and frustration among north St. Louis County residents searching for answers.

The EPA, in 2008, approved a plan to cap radioactive material at West Lake and install a system of groundwater monitors. Many area residents and environmental advocates instead want the waste removed, citing risk from floods, earthquakes and the potential for contaminants to migrate off-site.

The crowd at Tuesday’s meeting continued to push to transfer the West Lake site to the Army Corps of Engineers, which is excavating radiologically contaminated soils at several other St. Louis-area properties.

Resident Byron Clemens said the federal government was responsible for creating the waste during World War II but hasn’t done an adequate job managing the material after it was deposited at West Lake.

“We don’t want to wait another 40 years,” Clemens said. “When will you take it to a licensed facility? Get it out of here.”

EPA’s Cecilia Tapia, director of the EPA Superfund Division for Region 7, said the U.S. Department of Energy, one of the parties responsible for cleaning up the West Lake contamination, would have to transfer the site to the Corps of Engineers and Congress would have to appropriate funding.

North County residents say they are tired of waiting, especially because a smoldering fire that has burned within the adjacent Bridgeton Landfill for more than two years has only heightened concern about West Lake and focused attention on plans to manage the site.

Officials with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources say the subsurface fire is about 1,200 feet from West Lake, and they believe a system of gas wells installed in April is helping limit its movement.

And EPA Region 7 Administrator Karl Brooks said Tuesday that people who live and work in the area face no health risk from the West Lake site.

“It’s basically the same picture presented back in January,” he said. “The radiation from the material that was illegally buried some 40 years ago does not threaten public health, provided that you stay outside of the fenced area.”

Brooks said additional tests are scheduled before the EPA makes any further decision about how to move forward.

Dan Gravatt, remedial project manager for the West Lake site, said the agency will conduct two more rounds of groundwater sampling at West Lake in July and October, including some testing in surrounding areas.

The EPA has asked the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct a study to provide additional information on how groundwater at the site behaves. Brooks said the agency is evaluating a full scope of alternatives that include complete and partial excavation of radioactive materials. There is no timetable for the EPA to propose a new remedial plan.

“We’re back now at what amounts to the start of the process,” Brooks said.

But that only drew more anger from residents who expressed frustration at the lack of progress under the federal Superfund law.

“We can’t invent new procedures, we can’t invent new rules,” Brooks said. “It will be done with the evidence that we have with the law that we’re obligated to follow.”

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/angry-residents-tell-epa-officials-to-remove-west-lake-nuclear/article_48b128e2-18dd-547f-9fb9-a0d85b14e72e.html

St. Louis Public Radio - EPA Says Situation At West Lake Landfill Is Safe, Groups Concerned About Waste Near Floodplains-6/26/13 - There remains no public health threat from an underground fire at the Bridgeton Landfill that is burning near radioactive waste that was illegally buried at the nearby West Lake Landfill.

That was the message delivered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to hundreds of residents who packed the Pattonville High School in north St. Louis County Tuesday night.

“The water people drink is safe, the air they breathe is safe, the landfill material at the West Lake site remains where it’s been for a long period of time,” said EPA Region 7 Administrator Karl Brooks. “Provided people observe the fence and the signs, the radiation at that site does not threaten their public health.”

Brooks said the EPA along with state agencies have adequate time to determine the best way to protect the radioactive material from a fire that’s slowly creeping toward it. He did not give specifics as to how much time they have until a final decision must be reached, and he was not sure if there is currently a threat to wildlife in the area.

Brooks said because it is classified as a Superfund site, the EPA has the authority to “compel” the polluters that originally buried the waste, one of which he said was the U.S. Department of Energy, to pay for whatever solution is ultimately required.

Many people at the meeting angrily questioned the EPA’s assessment of the situation, and demanded that the radioactive waste be removed immediately. Others asked if their kids are safe and what the long-term risks are.

Beth Pross said it seems like they’re getting the run-around.

“They give us slow access to the test data, they get plenty of time to scrub it up and redefine the formulas on how they interpret it,” Pross said. “Then they say everything is wonderful and fine, that’s not acceptable.”

Floodplain Concerns

Environmental activists hold a map showing why they oppose putting hazardous waste in floodplains. The image on the right shows the reach of the Flood of 1993.

Local environmental groups are encouraging the public to speak out against the practice of putting toxic waste in the floodplains of the Missouri River.

The Missouri Public Service Commission is holding a hearing tonight to take public input on Ameren Missouri's request to build a [coal ash landfill](#) in Franklin County, in the Missouri River floodplain. Also tonight, the Environmental Protection Agency is releasing the findings of radiological testing it did near the [West Lake site](#) in Bridgeton.

Ed Smith, with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, says the danger posed by West Lake shows why the state should reject Ameren’s request for a coal ash landfill.

"MCE is concerned because floodplains flood," he said. "It's time institutions that govern our waterways start protecting them and people, instead of choosing to create new problems in our floodplains and let current problems fester."

In addition to being in a floodplain, the radioactive waste stored in the West Lake landfill is close to an underground fire.

Patricia Schuba with the Labadie Environmental Organization has been protesting the proposed coal ash landfill for years. It would sit in an area that flooded in 1993.

The country makes sure to put the waste from nuclear power plants inside a "stone fortress" so it doesn't cause any harm, Schuba said.

"But we seem to think these radioactive chemicals and heavy metals that impact our children, that they’re okay to put right here in this water. And that’s insane," she said.

<http://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/epa-says-situation-west-lake-landfill-safe-groups-concerned-about-waste-near-floodplains>

KMOX-TV - EPA Hosts Hearing Tonight on Bridgeton Radiation - 6/25/13 – The Environmental Protection Agency will hold a meeting tonight to answer questions about radioactive waste lurking underground near a landfill fire in Bridgeton.

The EPA says it will announce the results of groundwater tests that look for radioactive isotopes near the West Lake nuclear radiation site.

Ed Smith with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment says his group has already sent a list of questions to the EPA that it wants answered.

“We’re going to ask the EPA why we’re seeing more radioactivity in the ground water from the most recent report that they have on their website compared to what they used to inform their decision to leave the radioactive waste in place in 2008,” he said. “Back from December of 2012, for total radium in the groundwater, one of the wells that they drew from was five or six times above the EPA limit for radium in drinking water.”

Smith says his group and others are urging the federal government to remove that radioactive waste before the smoldering landfill fire gets any closer.

The meeting will take place from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Pattonville High School Auditorium.

“They’ve got a room to fit 500 people and I expect every seat to be taken,” Smith said.

<http://stlouis.cbslocal.com/2013/06/25/epa-hosts-hearing-tonight-on-bridgeton-radiation/>

KMOX - Anger Apparent At Bridgeton Nuclear Waste Hearing - 6/26/13 - BRIDGETON, Mo. (KMOX) - Nearly 500 Bridgeton residents packed into a Pattonville High School auditorium Tuesday night to ask Environmental Protection Agency officials what they are doing to monitor radioactive waste at the West Lake Landfill.

It was a meeting that often devolved into chaotic shouting and left many questions unanswered.

EPA Regional Director Carl Brooks was asked of his plans in case a fire at the Bridgeton Sanitary Landfill were to spread to the nuclear waste at West Lake. Brooks said there was “adequate time” before that happened.

“Enough time for the experts within the state agency as well as within the EPA to make the decisions that have to be made,” he said.

Many residents called on Brooks and the EPA to remove the West Lake waste.

“You don’t bury that stuff in a state where we’re on the New Madrid fault, it’s a known earthquake state, and then we’re next to states where they’re fracking, causing earthquakes like in Arkansas,” one woman said. “It is a no-brainer.”

The EPA says the removal would be costly and likely dangerous.

“Hopefully 500 kind of frustrated people showing up to a public meeting with the EPA will light a fire under their butts instead of the fire we have to deal with over here at the landfill,” Ed Smith with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment said.

Smith says he wasn’t surprised by the amount of anxiety and anger expressed at Tuesday night’s meeting.

Many residents blame cancer and birth defects on the West Lake waste, claims the Missouri Department of Health says it is investigating.

<http://stlouis.cbslocal.com/2013/06/26/anger-apparent-at-bridgeton-epa-hearing/>

St. Louis Beacon - [Angry crowd spars with state and federal officials over Bridgeton, West Lake landfills - 6/26/13](#) - For two and a half hours, federal and state officials were bombarded Tuesday night with the same angry message from hundreds of frustrated people packing the auditorium at Pattonville High School:

They want an end to the overpowering smell and radioactive waste that stems from two neighboring landfills – Bridgeton and West Lake – that some residents in northwest St. Louis County believe have been poisoning their groundwater, land and air for years.

The federal and state officials offered, in essence, the same reply. They're monitoring the situations, have taken some actions and, based on tests so far, believe there's no serious health threats.

But that assessment may change, both authorities acknowledge, if an underground fire plaguing the Bridgeton Landfill – and blamed for much of the smell – spreads to the radioactive waste stored about 1,200 feet away at West Lake.

The audience wasn't buying any of the assurances. "It's the usual blah, blah," complained Laura Dore of Florissant, who was sporting a T-shirt warning of contamination at another area site – Coldwater Creek – that wasn't even up for discussion at the public hearing.

[West Lake's waste from WWII 'Manhattan Project'](#)

Some of the attendees, like Doug Clemens of Bridgeton, have grown up or grown old hearing much of the same official message.

Clemens was 19 when he attended his first meeting to listen to federal officials discuss West Lake, where tons of radioactive waste stemming from the World War II nuclear-bomb program was illegally dumped in the 1950s.

Now 45, Clemens observed dryly, "I've heard the same song and dance all that time."

So has longtime environmentalist Kay Drey, among many wearing a T-shirt that called for removal of the West Lake waste. Drey contended that another federal agency – the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – needs to be ordered to take over the site and get rid of the radioactive material.

She was among several who pointed to the Corps' current removal work at a number of other area radioactive waste storage sites that also are linked to the World War II Manhattan Project that resulted in the world's first atomic bombs.

That federal removal is being conducted under the [Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program \(commonly called "FUSRAP"\)](#), set up in the 1970s. But West Lake doesn't qualify because it got its waste when a private hauler brought it in from other World War II-era locations in St. Louis.

Regional EPA director Karl Brooks and other agency officials repeatedly told the crowd that it's up to the Department of Energy, which oversees FUSRAP, to decide whether to include West Lake. And for Congress to earmark the removal money, which some longtime activists estimated at roughly \$25 million.

For decades, there's been no movement.

Many in the audience shouted their disapproval, declaring they were tired of the same explanations and the same inaction. "The urgency cannot be overstated," asserted resident Dianne Lee. "We would like the waste moved."

The audience gave her a standing ovation.

[Fears about Bridgeton's underground 'smoldering'](#)

The longstanding debate over West Lake has been complicated even further by the situation at Bridgeton Landfill, which is privately owned by Texas-based Republic Services and

governed by state laws.

Brooks deferred to state officials with the Department of Natural Resources and the Health Department, two of the state agencies monitoring Republic's attempts to stem the Bridgeton Landfill's smell – which has gotten particularly strong since 2010 and which some believe is linked to the underground fire that has reached more than 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

A few months ago, Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster sued Republic.

Map of Bridgeton and West Lake landfills. The smoldering and radioactive areas are highlighted
Republic's workers have been removing underground piers suspected of feeding oxygen to the fire – Republic prefers to call it a “smoldering” area – and are in the midst of enveloping the entire landfill with a new plastic cover.

Aaron Schmidt, division deputy director at DNR, said the agency is constantly monitoring the situation. So far, the fire is moving away from the radioactive waste at West Lake, he said.

Jonathan Garoutte with the state Health Department told the audience that the odor may be nauseating, but tests so far show it's not toxic.

Jim Preston of Maryland Heights said his sons play baseball at nearby Be-Mac Park, but “the stench is so bad, you don't even want to hang out there.”

Preston left Tuesday's hearing early, saying he hadn't heard anything new.

If he stuck around, he might have. The trials of the Bridgeton and West Lake landfills got even more convoluted when EPA director Brooks announced another possible complication.

It seems that officials at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport have issued a statement saying they're concerned that the cleanup activity at the landfill sites could stir up the bird populations and, as a result, might threaten the safety of planes taking off and landing at a nearby runway.

The audience booed.

https://www.stlbeacon.org/#!/content/31594/bridgeton_west_lake_epa_062513

St. Louis Beacon - [Activists gear up for EPA, state hearings on controversial landfills - 6/25/13](#) - Owners of the Bridgeton landfill – beset by a persistent odor, an underground “hot spot” and a nearby radioactive site – are likely prepared for an earful of complaints and concerns at Tuesday night's hearing hosted by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

The session is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. at Pattonville High School. It appears aimed at reassuring nearby residents concerned that their health has been at risk. Although the hearing is to focus on the neighboring West Lake landfill, the public debate has linked the two sites and isn't expected to differentiate.

Map of Bridgeton and West Lake landfills, with 'hot spot' and radioactive area marked

Meanwhile, workers report significant progress in installing a new “cap” on the Bridgeton landfill made of ethylene vinyl alcohol, which the operators hope will resolve many of the problems – in particular, the smell, which has been so bad at times that people residing nearby have been given temporary housing elsewhere.

The latest update from Republic Services, which owns the Bridgeton landfill, reports that the cap has been installed over at least seven acres.

Workers also have been trying to remove the underground pillars that some believe have contributed to the underground smoldering – Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster calls it a

“fire” – that has reached temperatures of over 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

Koster filed suit against Republic this spring, as part of an effort to resolve the problem with the Bridgeton landfill. A successful cleanup could resolve Republic’s legal problems.

However, controversy is likely to remain over the adjacent West Lake landfill, which has housed radioactive material since the 1970s.

The EPA hearing comes several weeks after the agency released the results of an aerial investigation, which agency officials say showed that the radioactivity was contained, and that there was no radioactive risk. The agency reports it also is monitoring the groundwater.

Meanwhile, many residents and environmental groups say they fear that the underground fire could reach the radioactive site, which is at least 1,000 feet away, Koster and others say.

Environmental groups to highlight landfill concerns

Environmental groups have a number of concerns and plan to air them before the hearing.

Tuesday morning, the Sierra Club, Missouri Coalition for the Environment and Labadie Environmental Organization held a press conference at the downtown riverfront “urging protection of Missouri’s waterways from current and proposed waste landfills along the Mississippi, Meramec and Missouri rivers.”

Their joint call, they said, is for “urgent action to clean up current waste sites in the floodplains, and prevent the construction of dangerous and risky new landfills.”

Environmental groups hold press conference downtown to discuss landfills.

Organizers say the press conference is prompted by Tuesday’s EPA hearing at Pattonville High School and by another hearing at the same time in Union, Mo. The latter, hosted by the Missouri Public Service Commission, is to discuss a plan by Ameren Missouri to build a landfill to store coal ash waste generated by the Labadie coal-fired power plant in Franklin County.

The environmental groups note that the coal ash landfill would be in the floodplain of the Missouri River.

“Our three organizations are here today to say the public must speak up,” said Patricia Schuba, president of the Labadie Environmental Organization, at the news conference.

In the case of the proposed Labadie landfill, she said, “We were muzzled by the (Franklin) County Commission, but tonight we can share our experiences and concerns with a public agency willing to listen,” a reference to the Public Service Commission.

Schuba said the debate over Labadie is similar to the controversy over the Bridgeton and West Lake landfills. “What we’re trying to do at Labadie is prevent what happened at West Lake,” she said.

Ed Smith, safe-energy director for the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, said that the ultimate goal of environmentalists is to see West Lake’s radioactive waste moved elsewhere – out of the flood plain and away from an urban area.

At the Pattonville hearing, Smith said, “I expect a huge crowd, but not a lot of new information. It’s going to be a chance for people to air their frustrations.”

https://www.stlbeacon.org/#!/content/31571/bridgeton_west_lake_landfill_062413?coverpage=3515

KMOV - EPA holds public meeting to discuss radioactive waste at Bridgeton landfill - 6/25/13 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency held a public meeting on Tuesday to

address concerns about a Bridgeton landfill that contains radioactive waste.

EPA officials will be on hand to discuss the agency's ongoing work at the West Lake Landfill.

Homeowners, environmental groups and some lawmakers have concerns about groundwater contamination and air quality. The EPA has insisted the radioactive material is contained and safe.

But in the last few months it has done testing on groundwater and deployed a plane to fly over the site and attempt to detect radioactive substances.

EPA reps talked to a large group of residents about the results during the meeting at Pattonville High School which began around 6:30 p.m.

The EPA's regional administrator Karl Brooks and Missouri environmental officials were in attendance at the meeting.

Some groups, including the Sierra Club, have called for an emergency removal of the radioactive material that's been at the site for decades. The EPA has so far said that is not necessary.

<http://www.kmov.com/news/local/EPA-holding-first-public-meeting-to-discuss-Bridgeton-Landfill-212882181.html>

Hazelwood Patch and Maryland Heights Patch - EPA Hosts Public Meeting on West Lake Landfill - 6/24/13 - The [Environmental Protection Agency](#) will be holding a public meeting Tuesday regarding West Lake Landfill and taking questions from the public, and the public will be ready.

According to a news release from the EPA's website, the meeting will be used to discuss the results of the Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology collected earlier this year. The ASPECT program is used to gather further information on a superfund site and make decisions pertaining to it.

"The results of the ASPECT survey are consistent with previous studies that indicate the site's radiological wastes remain contained inside Operable Unit 1," EPA Regional Administrator Karl Brooks said in a press release. "The site is securely fenced and clearly marked with warning signs. Under these conditions, this material poses no health risks to the public. A person would have to illegally trespass onto the site to be exposed to elevated levels of radiation."

The [Missouri Coalition for the Environment](#) sent a news release of their own to community members encouraging questions to the EPA. According to the release, the organization wants members to voice their thoughts on having radioactive nuclear wastes removed from West Lake Landfill and to have the subsurface landfill fire at the Bridgeton Landfill, near West Lake, stopped before reaching the radioactive wastes.

According to the EPA, the 200-acre site was originally home to limestone quarrying for more than 45 years. In 1973, though, two areas of the site became contaminated with radioactive waste from uranium ore processing residues.

Before Tuesday's meeting, community members [can submit questions through the EPA website](#).

The meeting will be held at [Pattonville High School](#), 2497 Creve Coeur Mill Rd. in Maryland Heights, at 6:30 p.m.

<http://hazelwood.patch.com/groups/politics-and-elections/p/epa-hosts-public-meeting-on-west-lake-landfill>